CORPORATE ISSUES

Session II Topic

"ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS ANALYSIS"

USACE

Environmental and Economics Conference

TOWARD INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Baltimore, MD

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS ANALYSIS: A LONG-TIME CHALLENGE

- **Ecosystem benefits are a subset of environmental benefits**
- **EBA became a serious planning concern with WRPA & NEPA**
- **In P & G policy environment constrains an NED objective**
  - **ID *significant resources* requiring protection/replacement**
  - **Avoid, minimize and mitigate for *significant effects***

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION ADDS CHALLENGES!

- 1986 WRDA made environmental improvement a Corps purpose
- Elevated communication needs between cost-sharing sponsors
- Policy following the 1986 WRDA continues to evolve
  - > Ecosystem Restoration EC in 1995
  - > Ecosystem Restoration ER in 1999
  - > Planning Guidance Notebook in 2000
  - > Environmental Operation Principles in 2002

SESSION INTENTS

- The emphasis is on underlying concepts and communication
- It is not so much on policy and planning details
- Policy raises complex ideas pertaining to the NER objective
  - quantity and quality of desirable ecosystem resources
  - significant ecosystem structure and function
  - a more natural condition

CONCERNS ABOUT ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS ANALYSIS

- Continued emphasis on budget constraints and returns from Federal investments
- Renewed interest in methods used to evaluate project outputs
- Adequacy of past methods and metrics has been questioned.
- “The difficulty with HEP and similar methods is that they capture only part of the national interest” (NRC, 1999a; p. 77).
- Clarity of plan outputs for stakeholder tradeoff considerations

ORGANIZATION OF SESSION PRESENTATIONS:

- **Mark McKevitt: An analysis of ecosystem restoration cost range at authorized projects**
- **Dick Cole: IWR study on environmental benefits analysis and a strategy for its improvement (was Lynn Martin)**
- **Paul Scodari: A conceptual and analytical framework for NER comparable to NED**
- **Dick Cole: A protocol for selecting**